Hughes Gift To Md. GOP Race Cited

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Billionaire recluse Howard Hughes contributed $10,000 in cash to the 1970 Maryland gubernatorial campaign of Republican C. Stanley Blair at the personal request of Blair's long time friend, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, a Hughes aide has testified in a civil suit deposition in Las Vegas.

"I delivered $10,000 . . . for delivery, I believe, to the then candidate for governor of the state of Maryland, who was a dear friend of the then Vice President of the U.S., Mr. Agnew, who had requested it of Mr. Hughes," Thomas G. Bell, Hughes' former assistant for political affairs, stated in the March 19, 1973 deposition.

"Mr. Hughes had instructed Mr. Maheu (former Hughes aide Robert A. Maheu) to honor the request for the money," Bell said. "I then delivered the money to Mr. Al Bishop in a manila envelope, $10,000."

According to Newsday, a Long Island newspaper that published a story about the $10,000 contribution in its Saturday afternoon editions, Bishop, who was a public relations employee of Maheu's, carried the envelope containing the $10,000—in $100 bills—to Washington and gave it to Gus Constantine.

Formerly employed in Vice President Agnew's office and

See BLAIR, A16, Col. 1

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BLAIR, From A1

a campaign associate of Blair, Constantine deposited the money in a Blair campaign account at a suburban Washington bank, Newsday reported.

Newsday also reported that the cash came from the cashier's cage of Huges' Silver Slipper casino in Las Vegas, the source of cash contributions to other candidates in other parts of the United States, according to depositions filed along with Bell's in Los Angeles. The depositions were filed in connection with a libel suit filed by Maheu against Hughes, who fired Maheu.

The $10,000 contribuiton to Blair, who has since been appointed to a U.S. District Court judgeship in Baltimore by President Nixon, was acknowledged yesterday in an interview by Alvin B. Krongard, who was treasurer of the Blair for Governor Committee.

"It was a contribution of $10,000 that came from somebody named Bishop or Maheu," Krongard said, adding that he remembered the money being given to Constantine at a Washington area airport.

Krongard said the contribution was reported anonymously on Blair's state campaign financing reports. "It was listed as a contribution from a bull roast" in Prince George's or Montgomery county, he said.

"There's nothing illegal about it," Krongard added. He said it was listed as the sale of $10,000 worth of tickets to the bull roast, "which is what it was."

Maryland law appears to require that buyers of more than $50 tickets at fund-raising events be identified by name on campaign finance reports. Blair's reports for the 1970 campaign were not available for inspection yesterday.

Maryland law also limits individual contribution to $2,500 to any campaign inside the state be reported, but it is unclear whether there is a similar requirement for a contribution from an out-of-state donor made at a fund-raising event inside the state.

Vice President Agnew's office issued a statement yesterday that said it "has no knowledge of any such intervention by the Vice President" to obtain a campaign contribution from Hughes to Blair.